(b) if so, what blueprint, if any, has been chalked out in this regard; and

(c) the progress, so far, made in the matter?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI S. S. PALANIMANICKAM): (a) to (c) A Task Force has been set up by the Government on 5.08.2004 under the chairmanship of Prof. A. Vaidyanathan to recommend an implementable action plan to revitalize the Rural Cooperative banks and to suggest an appropriate regulatory framework for the cooperatives. The report of the Task Force is expected by 31.12.2004. Necessary action to implement the recommendations of the Task Force will be considered immediately on receipt of the report. In so far as, Regional rural Banks (RRBs) are concerned, Government has informed the sponsor banks that they would be held solely accountable for the performance of RRBs sponsored by them. RRBs that adopt a new governance standard and that abide by the prudential regulations will also qualifiy for receiving funds from the Government for their restructuring.

Bluprint on Regulatory Standards for Infrastructure Sector

1217. SHRI KALRAJ MISHRA: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have prepared a blueprint on regulatory standards for infrastructure sector to evolve globally benchmark standards for infrastructure sector to evolve globally benchmarks standards in respect of sub-sectors like telecom, power, ports and roads and create investor-friendly environment;

(b) if so, the details in this regard;

(c) the other steps taken to improve infrastructure to international standards so as to attract foreign and other investment; and

(d) the total amount of Foreign Direct Investment and FN investments secured for this sector during the current year, so far, and how it compares with those during the years 2002-2003 and 2003-04?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI S. S. PALANIMANICKAM): (a) to (c) Government have constituted an eleven Memebr Committee on Infrastructure under the Chairmanship of Prime Minister with the objectives of initiating policies to ensure creation of world

class infrastructure facilities; developing structures that maximize the role of Public Private partnership; and monitoring of key infrastructure projects.

The Committee will deal with Railways, roads, ports, airports, telecom, petroleum and power sectors. To begin with, sector-wise policy initiatives and action plans are being prepared by the Planning commission in consultation with concerned Ministries/Departments.

■ (d) While the sector-wise details of Fll investments are not available, the Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in the power, telecom, air/sea transport and ports sectors during first 6 months of this year *i.e.,* April-September, 2004 is Rs. 718 crore. The FDI in these sectors during the full financial year 2003-4 and 2002-03 was Rs. 1312 crore and Rs. 1526.5 crore, respectively.

Opening of branches of Himachal Rural Bank

†1218. SHRI KRIPAL PARMAR: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) the action taken by Government to open branches of Himachal rural bank after the issue of Gazette notification dated the 18th April, 2004 to carry out expansion of branches in Hamirpur and Mandi (Himachal Pradesh) area;

(b) whether this Bank has applied to Reserve Bank of India to obtain the licence for opening its branches;

(c) if so, when did it apply; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor and by when the licence would be issued **and the** branches of the bank start functioning?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI S. S. PALANIMANICKAM): (a) The Himachal Gramin Bank (HGB) has opened 3 branches at Hamirpur, Una and Bilaspur on 7.1.2002, 8.1.2002 and 22.1.2003 respectively after issuance of the gazette nofification dated 18.4.2000.

(b) to (d) A proposal from Himachal Gramin Bank for opening four new

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.